



THE AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO WARFARE

## Report Documentation Page

*Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE <b>JUN 2002</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2002 to 00-00-2002</b>		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>The Australian Approach to Warfare</b>			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
			5b. GRANT NUMBER	
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)			5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
			5e. TASK NUMBER	
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>Australian Government, Department of Defence, Australia,</b>			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>				
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
14. ABSTRACT				
15. SUBJECT TERMS				
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>23</b>
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>		
19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON				



## FORWARD

As I, along with other senior Australian military commanders, have reflected on the activities of the Australian Defence Force in the past couple of years, we have asked ourselves a basic question: "Do we, as Australians, have a distinctive approach to war fighting?" We believe that we do, yet we have never before stated just what this distinctive approach is.

With recent operations firmly establishing the Australian Defence Force's credentials within Australia and beyond, I believed the time was right for us to produce a document that laid the foundation for the way we fight. In late 2000, I invited a group of very senior Australian Defence Force commanders to consider this issue. Our purpose was to lay the foundation for a document that sets out the principles on which Australian military doctrine is developed and implemented.

A number of main themes emerged from this process, and these themes have resulted in this doctrine publication: *"The Australian Approach to Warfare"*. This doctrine reflects a balance between our historical experience of warfare and how we might meet future challenges on future battlefields.

I see this publication as a key means of communicating important messages about the Australian Defence Force to members of our armed forces themselves, to the Australian community at large, to our allies, regional defence partners and potential coalition partners, and also to young Australians considering a career in Australia's armed forces.

Australia's military strives to maintain itself as a formidable fighting force so that if we are called upon to act, we can do so decisively and successfully. In living up to this aim, the Australian Defence Force has become a significant national institution and a valuable force for good in our community and well beyond our shores. It is important that our servicemen and women, and the Australian community that sustains them, have a clear understanding of the role of the Australian Defence Force and the values that underpin the way it operates. I commend this publication to you.



C A BARRIE

Admiral, RAN Chief of the Defence Force

Canberra

June 2002



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## INTRODUCTION

The Australian Defence Force is gearing itself to operate effectively in a rapidly changing world where investment, industry, information and individuals know few boundaries.

The so-called *Information Age* already has had a profound impact on how political, diplomatic, economic and military power will be exercised in the twenty-first century.

To meet future challenges, the Australian Defence Force needs an intimate understanding of the changing nature of society. It must be a flexible and adaptable organisation, acknowledging the role and limitations of armed force as a means of resolving conflict.

The Australian Defence Force is an important national institution in Australia. Its core function is to defend Australia from armed attack. In carrying out this and all its other functions, the Australian Defence Force is dependent on the support of the Australian people, is governed by the rule of law, and is subject to the direction of the Commonwealth Government as the civil authority.

The way that the Australian Defence Force is employed reflects Australian values about the primacy of the rule of law and of the civil authority in upholding the rule of law. The Government's use of the Australian Defence Force also reflects community values about the need for Australia, where it can, to seek to resist international aggression, relieve human suffering, promote justice and freedom internationally, and protect our borders and Exclusive Economic Zone.

A military force is therefore not simply an instrument of state power, it is also a reflection of the society from which it is drawn.

Since Federation in 1901, the successes and failures of military campaigns involving Australian troops have had a strong influence not only on Australia's physical security and political independence, but also on the way Australians think about themselves.

This influence in part developed from the high proportion of Australians involved in World War I and the high number of battle casualties. Few Australian families were untouched by that conflict. The community attitudes and outlooks generated by World War I were reinforced two decades later by the experience of World War II.

Significantly, although the proportion of the community having direct wartime involvement is declining, interest in Australia's past military experiences remains high, particularly among younger Australians. This recognition of Australia's past wartime sacrifices and achievements inevitably helps generate community expectations that those volunteer forces serving Australia today will retain the same ethos and similarly display high standards of performance in conducting operations.

For the Australian Defence Force to remain an honoured, disciplined and effective national institution, Australian Defence Force members will themselves have to understand the key influences on the Australian Defence Force approach to its conduct of operations, and how these are changing. Also the Australian community should appreciate the factors that shape the ethos of its armed forces and how these factors interact with community standards and ideals. At the same time – and as part of the Australian Defence Force's commitment to regional cooperation and security – it is useful for other nations to be aware of the values and commitment to professionalism of the Australian Defence Force.

This document sets out, for the benefit of the national and international communities and the Australian Defence Force itself, a clear and concise account of the Australian approach to warfare and of the constitutional, social, geo-strategic and cultural influences on this approach.





SECTION 1

THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE  
FORCE AND THE COMMUNITY

The recently released White Paper on Defence, *"Defence 2000 – Our Future Defence Force"* makes the point that the Australian Defence Force reflects the kind of country we are, the role we seek to play in the world, and the way we see ourselves.

There has been an important historical, cultural and psychological partnership between the Australian community and those people who have served in our armed forces. The unswerving willingness of young Australians from all walks of life – our past and present diggers, sailors and air men and women - to serve their country, nearly always voluntarily, and possibly to make the ultimate sacrifice, explains why the achievements, traditions and culture in the defence force are such an important part of the fabric of Australian life. The pride that Australians have in their defence force is reaffirmed each year in every city and town across the nation at the annual ANZAC Day commemorations and other important occasions such as Remembrance Day.

Today's Australian Defence Force is a highly respected volunteer force. The Australian Defence Force comprises full-time personnel and reservists, and is supported by civilian colleagues in the Department of Defence, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and the community. Australian Defence Force personnel and their families are drawn from, and live and work in our community. They draw extensive moral and physical support from the community. Our reservists, in particular, enhance and contribute a great deal to the relationship between the Australian Defence Force and the community. Our community understands and accepts the requirements of the unique 'profession of arms' of the Australian Defence Force.



SECTION 2

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL BASIS  
OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE

Australia's sovereignty as a self-governing nation-state is based on the free federation of its six States (then colonies) in 1901. Significantly, armed force had no role to play in the creation of the Australian Federation. The Australian Constitution, which outlines the institutional framework of our federal system, is firmly based in the liberal-democratic tradition. It draws upon elements of the British and the United States' models of governance to give Australians a unique system of Government, including an elected upper house. Compulsory voting is also a key feature of our Australian system of electing our representatives.

Under the Constitution, the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia has "...power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to ... the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth and of the several States, and the control of the forces to execute and maintain the laws of the Commonwealth" (Australian Constitution, Section 51 (vi)).

From the authority given to the Commonwealth Government under the Constitution, the *Defence Act* of 1903 establishes the fundamental concept of civil authority over the Australian Defence Force.

The Command-in-Chief of the Defence Force is vested in the Governor-General, who exercises their powers on the advice of the Commonwealth Government. Under the *Defence Act*, the Minister for Defence is responsible for the general control and administration of the Australian Defence Force. The Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of the Department of Defence jointly administer the defence force, subject to and in accordance with any directions of the Minister.

The Chief of the Defence Force has command of the Australian Defence Force under Australian law. The three Service Chiefs (Chief of Navy, Chief of Army and Chief of Air Force) are responsible to him for the command of their respective Services. As is the case with administration, the exercise of command must also be subject to and in accordance with any directions of the Minister.

Australia is bound by, and strongly supports the provisions of, the United Nations Charter. In the maintenance of international peace and security, friendly relations among nations, and international cooperation, Australia has worked assiduously towards building world peace.

By actively participating in international forums, promoting a range of United Nations activities and, where necessary, contributing to United Nations-authorised peace operations, Australia fulfils its responsibilities under the Charter. In this way, Australia also seeks to ensure that events elsewhere in the world do not directly threaten its territorial integrity. More importantly, it ensures that Australia's regional and international interests are advanced.

Australia also adheres to the Law of Armed Conflict, which is the body of international law governing how armed force may be used legitimately in resolving conflict.

Among other things, the Law of Armed Conflict provides for the:

- humane treatment of prisoners;
- distinction between combatants and civilians;
- protection of objects of historical or cultural significance; and
- prohibition of the use of certain kinds of weapons.

While armed conflict nearly always involves death and destruction, the Law of Armed Conflict provides an internationally accepted 'code of conduct' that seeks to prevent the worst excesses of warfare.





### Strategic Geography

Australia is a secure country. It obtains much of its security from its geographic environment. Australia – the only continent-country in the world – has a large land-mass, no land border with another country, a substantial natural resource base and vast ocean surrounds that include extensive areas of very shallow water. We have little experience in managing land border issues with any other country. Australia's people, industries and infrastructure are largely concentrated on the coast, in our eastern, south-eastern, and south-western fringes - remote from the major population centres of the world. Collectively, these physical characteristics contribute to our defence against armed attack using conventional means. They pose enormous problems for a would-be aggressor.

However, while Australia is difficult to attack, there is also a great deal to defend. We are a large country, and have a small population. Our military forces would be thinly stretched if there were a requirement to conduct concurrent military operations over wide areas of the country and its sea approaches. Moreover, conducting military operations in or from the northern parts of Australia would be a challenging task in terms of logistic support, transport, demands on civil infrastructure and, at times, the adverse effects of harsh climatic conditions on the performance of people and equipment. These factors highlight some of the challenges associated with the defence of Australia, although the chances of an armed attack on Australia remain low.

### Economic Geography

Australia is highly dependent on its international trade for national economic prosperity in an increasingly globalised world. This trade requires that the sea lines of communication in the Pacific and Indian Oceans remain available for our unimpeded free use and that shipping is not threatened by hostile forces. Our geographic isolation thus makes our international trade a potential strategic vulnerability. The most important trade routes for Australia are those with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, where the overwhelming

bulk of our international trade occurs. Not only is Australia's economic prosperity closely linked with the countries of this region, but it is also closely linked to the security of the region.

Australia's rich natural resource endowments, well-developed industrial economy, and sound scientific and technical base, also contribute to Australia's overall military capability.

#### **Political Geography**

The Asia-Pacific region, of which Australia is a part, seems set to be the most dynamic region in the world over the next few decades. Dominating the security of this region will be the nature of the international relationships of the region's major powers – China, India, Japan, Russia and the United States.

Closer to Australia, the countries of our immediate neighbourhood – Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and the island states of the Southwest Pacific – are confronted with major economic and political challenges. The diversity of cultures, political and social systems, religions and levels of economic development among the countries of Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific generally, present challenges for Australia in managing its relationships with them.

In recent years, the Asia-Pacific region has seen the fastest growth of military capabilities in the world. As the region becomes more prosperous, many countries of the Asia-Pacific region are investing in the development of more capable and sophisticated armed forces. This is particularly evident in the investment in advanced combat aircraft and more capable warships, and improvements in command and control. This trend is likely to continue for at least the next couple of decades. These developments have the potential to complicate relations between states of the Asia-Pacific region.

#### **Threats to Security**

In addition to potential security threats involving conventional military attack, Australia's security is also affected by emerging dangers posed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and their chief means of delivery – ballistic missiles), terrorism and attacks on information systems. Other, non-military threats to national security include natural disasters, pandemic diseases, illegal immigration, illegal fishing, people smuggling, environmental degradation, narcotics and transnational crime.

These threats (or potential threats) are of more immediate concern to Australia than the prospect of invasion or military intimidation. From time to time, the Australian Defence Force augments the

resources of other governments and government agencies having primary responsibility for dealing with non-military threats. Thus, in practice, the Australian Defence Force plays an important role in safeguarding Australia's national security that goes far beyond the Australian Defence Force's core requirement to deter or defeat armed attack against Australia or its interests.



## SECTION 4

## OUR NATIONAL CULTURE

Australia is a young country. Yet, in a relatively short time, our nation's history, traditions, and behaviour have shaped significantly our approach to the use of armed force.

Australia is a country with a history of stable government under a Western liberal system of parliamentary democracy. Principles of democratic government, including a respect for the rule of law and human rights, as well as social equity and fairness, are important to all Australians. The Australian ethic of egalitarianism and a 'fair go for all' has been a defining feature of the way we see ourselves, and the way others see us. This quality is largely drawn from a long history of immigrant settlers, who arrived in Australia, and were able to prosper according to their own efforts – not their family background, ethnicity or religious beliefs.

Although Australia has never maintained significantly large standing military forces outside of the two World Wars, or a large defence budget, on occasions Australians have fought and died in support of our beliefs, and to shape a better world for people who have been less fortunate.

We have always viewed the use of armed force as a means of resolving problems as a last resort in the art of statecraft. But whenever no other alternative seemed possible, we have committed our armed forces to fight, and win. Historically, however, the strong preference of the Australian people has been to resolve conflict peacefully.

Our national culture has changed significantly. During the first half of the twentieth century Australia, as an integral part of the British Empire, demonstrated a strong affiliation with Anglo-Saxon cultural, diplomatic and military norms. In many ways Australia was historically, culturally and demographically a part of Europe, and yet geographically was part of Asia. During this period, we played a major role in upholding and preserving fundamental Western democratic beliefs by our participation in both World Wars.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Australia's population increased significantly through immigration. Once the barriers to non-white immigrants were lifted, people from many countries came to Australia, and our economic links with the Asia-Pacific region grew enormously. While the Western cultural heritage still underpins Australia's political and social institutions, these have adapted to meet the needs of the modern Australia with an emphasis on the benefits of diversity and a multicultural society. Australia's long term security and economic prosperity are strongly linked to our relationships with the countries and peoples of the Asia-Pacific region.

During and after World War II, defence and security links between Australia and the United States grew significantly, and we now consider our alliance with the United States our most important single strategic relationship. Today, Australia makes its own decisions about its defence and security needs, particularly as we strive to create and preserve the necessary conditions for shared prosperity and mutual security.

Throughout our history strong cross-Tasman links with New Zealand have been maintained, not least in the military sense as enshrined in the ANZAC tradition. In the last forty years our bilateral defence links with other countries in our region have also grown in importance, especially within Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific. The Five Power Defence Arrangements which commit Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom to assist Malaysia and Singapore against external aggression, are an important reflection of the priority we give to the security of Southeast Asia.

In more recent times we have participated in a considerable number of multinational peace operations, some of which we have led. Many of these have been in places outside the Asia-Pacific region, such as Africa and the Middle East. Most of these operations have been under the banner of the United Nations, and reflect continuing support within Australia to contribute to the maintenance of international collective security and action to alleviate human suffering.

In the twenty first century, as the aspirations of our national culture adapt to new developments in international relations and the position of the Australian economy in a globalised world, it is likely that our historical commitment to defend human rights, support democratic values and foster respect for international law will be unchanged, as we seek to make the world a fairer place for all.





## SECTION 5

## DEFENCE POSTURE

We use the term 'defence posture' to describe a nation-state's military capability and its orientation in relation to other states. It may also encompass perceptions by other states of the implications for them of that capability and orientation. For these reasons our defence posture possesses both physical and political dimensions.

**Physical Dimension**

The physical dimension of posture relates to our physical capability to apply armed force. It includes, for example, the overall level of spending on national defence in relation to our national resources, because this represents the strength of our commitment to use our armed forces when other means of securing our national interests fail. It also includes the size, composition, training and equipment of the force; location of force elements; and the professionalism, readiness and sustainability of the force. The significance of our posture in the eyes of another country may not be the absolute levels or values involved, but the changes in them over time that might signal a change of intent to use the defence force in pursuit of policy objectives.

The physical dimension also brings into focus such factors as technology, education, health, public infrastructure, and the scientific and industrial base. The willingness of a society to maintain adequate levels of investment in all of the physical components of posture is an important factor in maintaining an overall defence posture appropriate to national defence and security interests and objectives.

**Political Dimension**

The political dimension relates to our orientation and our willingness to apply armed force. It covers the full range of defence and national security policies that relate to the values, objectives and strategies to be employed in safeguarding and promoting perceived national interests. In this context, policies on issues of national security, sovereignty and international relations are important.

Our defence posture is also affected by the perceptions in other countries of our policies, actions and activities. Judgements on this aspect of our defence posture are subjective; they are dictated as much by the history and state of bilateral relations, as by the objective facts of the physical and political dimensions of posture.

#### **Our Objectives**

In accordance with Government policies, the Australian Defence Force aims to be, and be perceived as being, a highly-trained, well-equipped, professional force, and one that operates within the boundaries set by domestic and international law and ethical standards. To achieve this, the Australian Defence Force aims to develop and maintain high levels of professional warfighting mastery. In pursuing such mastery, our defence force deliberately focuses its training upon the most demanding and dangerous warfighting tasks, enabling it to perform lower level peacekeeping missions with comparative ease.

The priority task of the Australian Defence Force is the defence of Australia. Our approach is shaped by three principles. First, we must be self-reliant, that is, be able to defend Australia without having to rely on another country's combat forces. Second, Australia must be able to control the air and sea approaches to our continent. Third, whilst Australia's strategic posture is defensive, we would seek to attack hostile forces as far from our shores as possible.

We also want the Australian Defence Force to be able to play a positive role, in concert with the defence forces of other countries, in promoting and fostering security within our own region.

In addition, the Australian Defence Force must be able to support Australia's wider interests and objectives by being able to contribute effectively to international coalition forces to meet crises beyond our immediate neighbourhood.

As well as these objectives, there are a number of other tasks which the Australian Defence Force may be called upon to perform in order to deal with non-military threats to our security. These include coastal surveillance, counter-terrorist response, emergency management, search and rescue and disaster relief. Traditionally, the Australian Defence Force has excelled at handling these non-military threats by drawing on the same qualities that have helped it to fulfil the core priorities mentioned in the above paragraphs.





## SECTION 6

THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE  
APPROACH TO WARFARE**The Origins of the Australian Defence Force Approach to Warfare**

The Australian Defence Force's principal philosophy of warfare derives from our long involvement in Western approaches to warfare. The Australian perspective reflects a sound understanding of our constitutional framework, geo-strategic influences, national identity and culture, tempered by lessons from past conflicts. An appreciation of these complementary areas helps explain the distinctive ethos, character and sense of identity of Australia's armed forces throughout their history, and the way the present-day Australian Defence Force conducts military operations.

**Warfare Concepts for the Australian Defence Force**

Our warfare concepts reflect Australia's particular geographic environment, military and economic resource constraints, the opportunities offered by technological change and innovation, and the professionalism and fighting spirit of our defence force. The Australian Defence Force needs to be aware of, and adapt to, changes to these factors. Forces must be able to innovate and improvise to overcome obstacles, whether operational, logistic or human, and achieve coherence across all levels of command. Australia's limited resources put a premium on professional skill, delegation and initiative, and a robust command, control and communications system so as to make decisions better and more quickly than an adversary. And it is these characteristics which make Australia's application of essentially Western warfare concepts unique.

Key warfare concepts for Australia include:

- integration of the capabilities of the three Services (Navy, Army and Air Force) in joint operations;
- the early resolution of conflict in a way that allows Australia not only to 'win the war', but also 'win the peace';
- maximisation of the physical and psychological pressure on the adversary's will to continue fighting. This may involve attrition of the adversary's forces at critical points, but is distinct from a focus on attrition of the adversary's forces and economic resources or on gaining territory;

- mobility of forces and well-directed application of firepower to ensure both economy of effort and decisive effect; and
- the ability to operate effectively in coalition with other nations when required.

Australia's approach to warfare focuses on coordinated joint operations across the physical environments of undersea, sea, land and aerospace. This is not to deny the particular demands of the operational environment in which each Service trains and fights, nor the Service values enshrined in their traditions. But, for Australia, the conduct of joint operations, rather than single-Service operations, is a matter of practical necessity. It is the effective integration of thought and action at all levels of command to achieve the common goal that produces a synergy in the conduct of operations which is the strength of our joint warfare approach.

The Government directs the Australian Defence Force to conduct military operations in a political context. Post-conflict relations between nations will be influenced by their treatment of each other during the conflict. Accordingly, when the Australian Defence Force takes action to 'win the war', it must be aware of its potential impact on the relationships between Australia and other members of the international community in the longer term. There are two broad types of approaches to warfare – manoeuvre and attrition.

'Manoeuvre warfare' is the key strategic and operational concept influencing the way the Australian Defence Force conducts operations. This involves the movement and placement of forces in a favourable position relative to the enemy and the application of firepower such that the physical and psychological effect is sufficient to break an enemy's will to continue fighting or otherwise conclude hostilities on Australia's terms.

The Australian Defence Force must try to avoid 'attrition warfare', which emphasises the destruction of weapons platforms, personnel, supporting infrastructure and other resources through the application of overwhelming combat power. While attrition warfare may be effective in some situations, it is inefficient, particularly above the tactical level, as it is too personnel – and resource intensive – as a form of warfare for the Australian Defence Force to sustain.

So for Australia, manoeuvre warfare is generally preferred and, in many cases, is a matter of necessity. The Australian Defence Force aims to use manoeuvre concepts to contain casualties, particularly civilians, minimise collateral damage and achieve the desired outcome as quickly as possible. Manoeuvre and attrition are not mutually exclusive approaches to warfare however, as manoeuvre warfare almost inevitably involves the use of attrition through the application of firepower and direct combat, at critical points.

It is important for the Australian Defence Force to be able to conduct coalition operations in support of Australia's national security objectives, where required. This may be important for reasons of overall force-effectiveness or for international policy reasons such as lending support to a particular cause or nation. To participate in, or to lead, a coalition, Australia requires detailed knowledge of coalition partners, including their military affairs and language, politics and culture, and also needs to maintain a flexible and cooperative attitude. Accordingly, the Australian Defence Force maintains defence relationships with a variety of nations with whom we may be required to operate in a coalition. Australia has two formal alliance partners, the United States and New Zealand, and a network of cooperative bilateral relationships with the defence forces of regional countries. Australia also occasionally operates with a wide range of other defence forces as part of the Australian Defence Force's participation in multinational peace operations, usually under United Nations auspices.

#### **The Importance of Example and Initiative**

The Australian Defence Force recognises the importance of leadership in maximising the operational effectiveness of the Australian Defence Force approach to warfare. Accordingly, the Australian Defence Force places a strong emphasis on cultivating leadership qualities in Australian Defence Force members. One of the strengths of the Australian Defence Force historically has been the high quality of its leaders at all levels.

Commanders and their staff set the example for others to follow, through their personal qualities of integrity, courage, loyalty and compassion. Leadership by example helps the Australian Defence Force maintain morale, avoid wasted effort, and promote initiative in young leaders.

In most military operations, senior commanders will be in a position to convey only guidance, and will rely on the initiative of their subordinate commanders to achieve the mission. Involvement in past conflicts has amply demonstrated in our young leaders the qualities of resourcefulness, initiative and the ability to adapt rapidly and in an innovative manner to changing situations. The importance placed on these attributes is a distinctive feature of the Australian Defence Force approach to warfare and it will be important for the Australian Defence Force's operational effectiveness that its training regimes continue to foster them.

Technological advances, particularly in the areas of communications, detection of forces and mass destruction of forces, may result in the future in the Australian Defence Force operating more and more in small, dispersed combat groupings. This will place even heavier responsibility on our younger leaders, and reinforces the importance of developing initiative and resourcefulness throughout the Australian Defence Force.

An important requirement for commanders and their staff is having a sound understanding of the culture and values of friendly forces that may be participating in a coalition operation, and of neutral parties that may be caught up in the conflict. Commanders and staff similarly need a deep appreciation of the nuances of an adversary's culture and national values, as well as knowledge of their equipment, force dispositions and military command arrangements in order to 'get inside their thinking' and break their will to continue fighting.

#### Core Qualities

The Australian Defence Force aims to cultivate and display certain core qualities in its personnel. And while these qualities may exist in other national armed forces, it is the way the Australian Defence Force fosters these through training and experience that has shaped the Australian Defence Force's *esprit de corps* and enabled it to develop its distinctive approach to warfare. These qualities, which are vital in combat situations, are:

**Professionalism.** To achieve effectiveness and efficiency in military operations, there is no substitute for professional skill and attitude. Professionalism is the level of competence displayed by individuals, combat teams, headquarters, formations and units. Professionalism is about having high levels of technical skill and applying that skill with discipline, good judgment and adherence to ethical standards. This professionalism is developed in the Australian Defence Force through careful selection, thorough military training, ongoing education and experience.

**Trustworthiness.** Operational success, morale and group cohesion all depend on trust. All Australian Defence Force members need to have this vital attribute given the life-threatening situations in which Australian Defence Force members may be placed during military operations. Australian Defence Force members must act with integrity, regardless of the personal cost, and gain the trust of their fellow Australian Defence Force members. In peacetime we help to build this sense of trust by nurturing and caring for our people through placing a strong emphasis on safety and the elimination of unnecessary risk from our training activities. Further, we seek to ensure that their families are properly looked after, particularly when they are not there to do this themselves.

**Morality and Legitimacy of Action.** Combat operations inevitably involve death and destruction. Nevertheless, all Australian Defence Force members need to adhere to the Law of Armed Conflict and the moral principles that underlie them, so that military operations are conducted in ways that ensure the Australian Defence Force retains its legitimacy as a fighting force.

**Teamwork and Initiative.** Although the Australian Defence Force emphasises the importance of individual initiative, it does so in the context of the effect this has on enhancing teamwork. Only through good teamwork can the potential contribution of each individual member be maximised.

**Courage and Compassion.** The Australian Defence Force seeks to ensure that its members balance a strong fighting spirit with a spirit of compassion – particularly towards non-combatants caught up in a conflict. Also, Australian Defence Force leaders at all levels have a duty of care to those under their command.

**Fairness and Respect for the Individual.** The Australian Defence Force balances the need for a hierarchical structure for reasons of operational necessity and effectiveness with the recognition that all members of the Australian Defence Force are of equal worth as human beings and are entitled to 'a fair go'.

**Carefully Directed Effort.** While the Australian Defence Force seeks to achieve militarily decisive outcomes, it also seeks to do this in ways that avoid needless loss of life or property. Australian Defence Force commanders and members therefore need to apply armed force with discrimination so as to achieve decisive military outcomes with as little collateral damage and wastage of resources as possible.



## CONCLUSION

Australia has maintained national military forces since Federation in 1901. In the century since Federation, these forces have been called upon on numerous occasions to conduct military operations on behalf of the Australian people to protect Australia's sovereignty and national interests. These operations have ranged from those of a comparatively benign nature over a short period, to those that have made very heavy demands, in times of serious national peril, on the resources and fighting spirit of Australian troops and the Australian community. In all of these operations, Australia's armed forces have performed in ways that have upheld national values and ideals, and that have earned the respect and admiration of the Australian community and other countries.

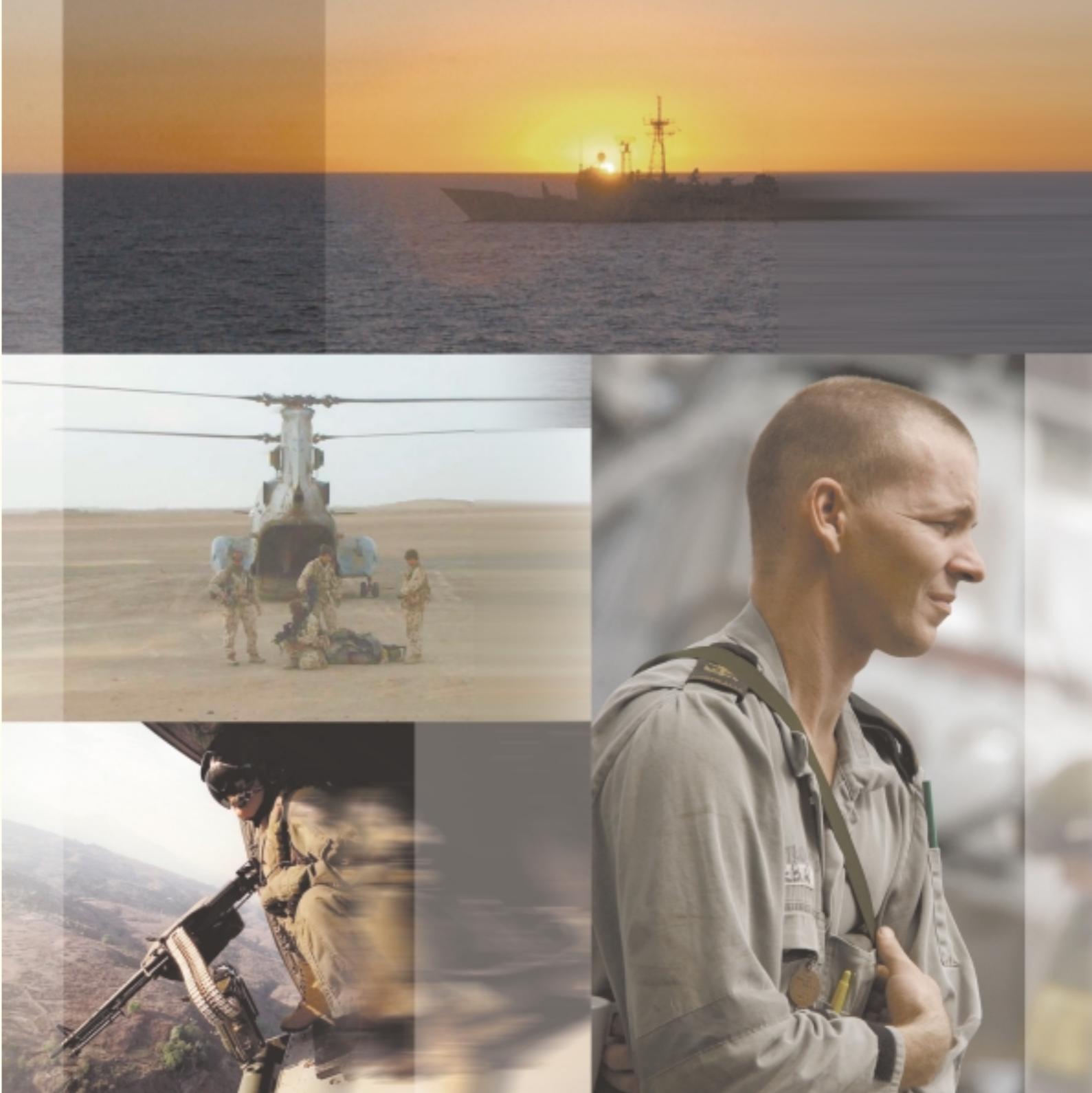
This document has sought to emphasise a number of key themes that are important for the present-day Australian Defence Force and for Australian society. These themes include:

- the primacy of the civil authority, that is the Commonwealth Government, over the tasking of the Australian Defence Force;
- the strong links the Australian Defence Force retains with the Australian community: the Australian Defence Force is drawn from the community and supported by it and reflects the values of Australian society;
- the Australian Defence Force is a professional fighting force which, at all times, conducts military operations in accordance with the international laws, conventions and mores governing the conduct of armed conflict;
- the Australian Defence Force remains ready and able to defend Australia's territory and national interests, and make contributions to international peace and security by operating alongside allies and other partners;
- a distinctive feature of the Australian approach to warfare is the way that it emphasises the role of initiative in Australian Defence Force members, but not in a way that cuts across the requirement for effective teamwork and unit cohesion. The Australian Defence Force aims to train and use its people in ways that allow individual commanders and other personnel to maximise their personal contribution in any given operational situation;

- a further characteristic of the Australian way of warfare is the Australian Defence Force's emphasis on manoeuvre as an operational concept. This warfighting approach maximises the Australian Defence Force's strengths and minimises exposure of its vulnerabilities. In particular, manoeuvre emphasises the importance of joint operations, timely and accurate intelligence, short decision cycles, mobility of forces, and economy of effort; and
- the quality of commanders and their staff is vitally important to the Australian approach to warfare, and to the operational effectiveness of the Australian Defence Force. Through personal qualities of integrity, courage, fairness, loyalty and compassion, commanders gain and retain the respect of subordinates and the wider community. Our troops have likewise gained an enviable reputation for resourcefulness, ingenuity and courage, combined with good humour in tough situations. The Australian Defence Force will maintain its commitment to encouraging the development of these personal qualities and attributes in its personnel.

In the twenty first century, the world will change at an increasingly rapid rate as the *Information Age* gathers even greater pace. Investment, industry, information and individuals will flow with increasing ease across boundaries of all types. All of this will have a profound impact on how political, diplomatic, economic and military power is exercised. The Australian Defence Force needs to have an intimate understanding of the changing nature of society, and of the role of armed force as a means of resolving conflict. The Australian Defence Force must also be a flexible and adaptable organisation, as well as a capable fighting force, if it is to apply successfully the Australian Defence Force approach to warfare in meeting the challenges of the future.

Thus, the Australian Defence Force needs to maintain its core qualities and clear understanding of its role in Australian society, while at the same time being responsive to the political and social changes taking place around it, both nationally and internationally. If it can balance its sense of history and place in society with an awareness of the challenges of the future, the Australian Defence Force will continue to serve the Australian people as effectively in the future as it has in the past.





George Coates and Dora Meeson

General William Bridges and his staff watching the manoeuvres of the 1st Australian Division in the desert in Egypt, March 1915.  
1922-26. Oil on canvas. Australian War Memorial.

## AUSTRALIAN MILITARY OPERATIONS SINCE 1901

In addition to its significant participation in major global or regional conflicts of the twentieth century, particularly the two **World Wars**, the **Korean War** and the **Vietnam War**, Australia's military forces have conducted a very wide range of operations in support of Australia's national interests and global security.

Some prominent examples include:

- 2001 – present      **War on Terrorism**   Participation in US-led campaign against international terrorism.
- 2000 – 2002      **Solomon Islands**   Monitoring peace agreement signed by warring ethnic factions and the Solomon Islands government.
- 1999 – present      **East Timor\***   Leadership of a UN-sanctioned international force following the civil unrest which accompanied the independence ballot.
- 1998 – present      **Bougainville**   Participation in the multinational Peace Monitoring Group and Truce Monitoring Group to supervise ceasefire after a nine-year civil war.
- 1998      **PNG (Tsunami Disaster)**   Medical support for the victims of the tidal wave which hit the northern Papua New Guinea coastline killing over 3 000 people.
- 1994 – present      **Mozambique\***   Landmine clearance.
- 1994 – 1995      **Rwanda\***   Provision of medical support, following widespread communal killings.
- 1993      **Somalia\***   Participation in US-led operation protecting and assisting the distribution of humanitarian aid after prolonged drought and civil war displaced approximately two million Somalis.
- 1991 – present      **Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia\***   Mediation between Croats and Serbs, and enforcement of ceasefires in Bosnia following the dissolution of Yugoslavia.
- 1991 – 1994      **Western Sahara\***   Monitoring ceasefire between Morocco and the Saharawi people, and conducting a referendum on the territory's future.

\* Mission performed under UN auspices

1991 – 1993	<b>Cambodia*</b> Transitional force established to verify Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia, the ceasefire between the four Cambodian factions, and the holding of general elections.	1950 – 1985	<b>India and Pakistan*</b> Negotiation and observation of ceasefires between India and Pakistan in the disputed territory of Kashmir.
1991	<b>Turkey*</b> Provision of care for Kurdish refugees following 1990-91 Gulf War.	1947 – 1951	<b>Indonesia*</b> Supervision of Dutch withdrawal from Indonesia, as part of the first UN peacekeeping mission.
1990 – 1991	<b>The Persian Gulf*</b> Participation in the US-led coalition against Iraq following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.	1901 – 1927	<b>Imperial Operations</b> Operations in support of imperial policy and regional security, including the South African War, the Boxer uprising in China, and dealing with civil disturbances in the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands.
1990 – present	<b>Iraq*</b> Monitoring economic sanctions against Iraq, and Iraqi compliance with the ceasefire and disarmament agreements stemming from the 1990-1991 Gulf War.		
1989 – 1993	<b>Pakistan and Afghanistan*</b> Provision of landmine clearance expertise.		
1989 – 1990	<b>Namibia*</b> Construction and landmine clearance support for the force assisting the transition to self-government in Namibia.		
1988 – 1990	<b>Iran*</b> Supervision of the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq following the 1980-1988 Gulf War.		
1982 – 1986 and 1993 – present	<b>Sinai Peninsula</b> Monitoring the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula and Egypt's subsequent compliance with the 1980 Camp David Accords.		
1979 – 1980	<b>Rhodesia</b> Monitoring the ceasefire, cantonment and disarmament of various groups, the conduct of general elections and the supervision of Rhodesia's transition to independence as Zimbabwe.		
1962 – 1966	<b>Northern Borneo and Malaysia</b> Restoration of stability to the newly formed state of Malaysia, following incursions by Indonesian troops.		
1956 – present	<b>Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan*</b> Monitoring various ceasefires between Israel and its Arab neighbours.		
1955 – 1962	<b>Malaya</b> Suppression of communist insurgency.		

ISBN 0-642-50184-X

This publication: June 2002

Prepared by the Department of Defence  
Public Affairs & Corporate Communication  
2001/10769/0602

Designed by Fusebox

Additional artwork by Whizzbang Art

Printed by National Capital Printing  
Photographs © Commonwealth Department of Defence

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